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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
15th meeting
held on
Friday, 1 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)

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AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/46/169 and Add.1, A/46/185, A/46/254, A/46/591; A/SPC/46/L.9)

1. Mr. AL-SABAH (Kuwait) said that the Committee's comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects at the current session was of particular importance because of the growing role of the United Nations in that field. Owing to the developments from which a new international order was emerging, there had been an increase in the number of peace-keeping operations undertaken by the United Nations over the past two years, which was evidence of the growing credibility of the Organization. Because the responsibility for peace and security in the world was a collective one, it was incumbent on all parties to meet their obligations and to pay their assessments in full and in a timely fashion so that the United Nations could perform its peace-keeping functions in an effective manner.

2. It was a matter for universal pride that the United Nations had met the enormous challenge presented by the Iraqi regime's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and by its occupation and annexation of the country in open defiance of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles underlying international relations. The United Nations, as represented by the Security Council, had acted in a way consistent with the importance of that severe test, adopting the appropriate resolutions and taking the necessary measures to put an end to the aggression in a manner that gave substance to the concept of a new international order based on international legitimacy. Following the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty and independence, the Security Council had, under the terms of its resolution 687 (1991), established the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) in order to monitor the cease-fire, ensure the inviolability of the international boundaries and safeguard peace in the region.

3. Mr. KADRAT (Iraq), speaking on a point of order, regretted that the Kuwaiti representative was taking advantage of the item under discussion to refer to the Gulf crisis. Iraq had complied fully with the resolutions adopted to deal with the crisis, yet its people continued to suffer as a result of the unauthorized sanctions imposed on the country in defiance of all humane principles and international law. The most recent report of UNIKOM had stated that, despite the presence of observers, Kuwait had committed more violations than Iraq in the demilitarized zone. All other Committee members had reasonably and objectively discussed the technical and practical aspects of the item in question.

4. Mr. AL-SABAH (Kuwait) said that his country had endeavoured to facilitate the task of UNIKOM in appreciation of its worthy character and in full realization of the difficult conditions that the Mission faced at the outset. Kuwait would continue to cooperate to the full in order to assist the effective implementation by UNIKOM of its mandate and would endeavour to

(Mr. Al-Sabah, Kuwait)

ensure the safety of its personnel, just as it would continue to meet its obligations with respect to all peace-keeping operations in the world.

5. His delegation would like to thank all of the countries that had contributed personnel to the Mission and those that were providing it with assistance. Its gratitude also went to the individuals currently stationed in difficult conditions and advancing the cause of peace in the Iraq-Kuwait border area. Kuwait wished to place on record its appreciation for the enormous sacrifices made by United Nations peace-keeping forces in establishing and maintaining peace.

6. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that, although peace-keeping as a concept was not specifically mentioned in the Charter, the recent extraordinary improvement in the global political climate had led to a dramatic expansion in the number of United Nations peace-keeping operations. Nine such operations had been launched during the previous three years as against 13 in the preceding 43 years. The operation that was about to be launched in Cambodia might be the largest and most complex in the history of the United Nations and would add a new dimension to the peace-keeping endeavours of the Organization. In addition to the traditional peace-keeping functions, peace-keeping operations currently performed a wider range of tasks, including the supervision of elections and monitoring of the implementation of complex agreements. In view of their multi-faceted nature, it was important to study ways of combining the military, police and civilian components in order to enhance the effectiveness of peace-keeping operations.

7. The emergence of new conflicts and the recent crisis in the Gulf had underlined the importance of conflict-prevention modalities to defuse potential conflicts in their embryonic stage. In that connection, the United Nations should have a greater role in fact-finding and in gathering and analysing information about the real state of international relations. Timely, accurate and unbiased information to deal with potentially explosive situations was a vital necessity, and the Organization should make use of modern technology and advanced surveillance systems in order to monitor potential conflict situations from an impartial standpoint.

8. Difficulties in the financing of peace-keeping operations not only caused delays in the mounting of new operations but also placed an inequitable financial burden on troop-contributors, especially those from developing countries. The financing of peace-keeping operations was the collective responsibility of the entire international community, and Member States should pay their assessed contributions in full and on time in order to establish a sound and secure financial basis for such operations.

9. Training was also an important component of peace-keeping operations, and his delegation therefore welcomed the training guidelines issued by the Secretariat and hoped that they would be regularly updated. The Organization should also consider ways of formalizing training for peace-keeping within national armies. More training seminars at the regional, national and

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

international levels were also required and consideration should be given to the establishment of an international training centre under the auspices of the United Nations.

10. Bangladesh was committed to the peace-keeping role of the United Nations and had contributed military observers and police personnel to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observor Group (UNIIMOG), UNIKOM, and most recently to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Peace-keeping operations were a dramatic way of demonstrating the international will to peace and conciliation in areas of conflict and, if backed by international consensus and sustained by genuinely international efforts, could become a reliable and important part of broader efforts to build a world at peace.

11. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand) said that the Committee's current debate was timely in that it coincided with the launching of the first phase of a peace-keeping operation in Cambodia that was expected to be one of the most comprehensive and difficult in the history of the United Nations. The importance that Member States attached to United Nations peace-keeping could be seen not only in the more clearly focused discussions but also in the willingness of States to make contributions to such arduous and dangerous operations. Collective security, however, was not only desirable but also a matter of necessity and common sense. New Zealand was proud to have served in various United Nations and other peace-keeping operations since the 1960s and to be participating in several current operations.

12. His delegation welcomed the Special Committee's practice, in the previous year, of conducting informal meetings inter-sessionally. While the Special Committee's report (A/46/254) contained useful suggestions about the training of peace-keepers and the establishment of an annual peace-keeping fellowship, some of its members had cautioned about the need for relevance as the Special Committee sought to address imaginatively and effectively the broadening demands that were being placed on United Nations peace-keeping. The enlargement of peace-keeping operations should be carried out in an orderly way, with proper preparation and with adequate funding and other resources.

13. New Zealand welcomed the broader role for United Nations peace-keeping operations, which had notched up clear successes in the area of monitoring respect for human rights and in election monitoring. Even though some of those operations did not fit the narrow definition of peace-keeping, they placed the same demands on the Secretariat. His delegation therefore welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to undertake a review of the planning and management of peace-keeping operations. Closer and more effective coordination of activities would no doubt lead to greater efficiency and to more cost-effective operations.

14. While it might be fashionable to suggest that reforms in the Secretariat were needed in order to improve the management of peace-keeping, Member States also had a binding obligation to make their payments on time and in full.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

Delays in responding to invitations to contribute to an operation could be critical, and the failure of many States to respond to the Secretary-General's questionnaire on resources which they might be able to make available hardly eased the Secretariat's burden.

15. New Zealand had long advocated the expansion of the Working Capital Fund to ensure that the Secretary-General had access to start-up funding during the critical first phase of any peace-keeping operation. Access to such funding by the Secretary-General would have greatly facilitated the early days of UNAVEM II, an operation that had been described as the toughest United Nations peace-keeping operation currently in train.

16. Finally, his delegation supported the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/46/L.9, which suggested that in the post-cold war world emphasis could be placed on the maintenance of international peace and security through prevention rather than through post-conflict monitoring of cease-fires and the control of buffer zones.

17. Mr. HOLGER (Chile) said that the expansion and evolution of peace-keeping operations reflected the changes that had occurred in international relations and the resulting needs and challenges that had arisen. Peace-keeping operations enhanced the effectiveness and prestige of the Organization while revealing its enormous potential for preventing, managing and resolving situations of conflict in the emerging world order. The draft resolution currently before the Committee accurately reflected the current situation of peace-keeping operations and their future prospects.

18. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/75, the United Nations had undertaken a number of peace-keeping operations which included: (a) the launching of three new missions along the Iran-Iraq border, in Western Sahara and in El Salvador, respectively; (b) the expansion of the mission in Angola, which would play an important role at a time when that country was preparing to hold elections; (c) the preparation of an ambitious mission in Cambodia, which could well be the largest peace-keeping operation in the history of the United Nations. Chile welcomed the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council in UNIKOM and MINURSO, and hoped that such participation would extend to future operations.

19. His delegation took note of the increasing diversification of the activities of peace-keeping missions, whose mandates covered, inter alia, different forms of participation in electoral processes, as in the cases of Namibia and Nicaragua, and recognized that some of those missions did not constitute peace-keeping operations in the strict sense of the term. Another new modality of operation was employed by the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), whose mandate covered measures aimed at preventing any act or practice directed against the life, integrity, security and freedom of individuals. His delegation hoped that the mandate of ONUSAL could, at an early date, be made to include the monitoring of the cease-fire in that

(Mr. Holger, Chile)

country, which was a key aspect of the negotiations being conducted by the personal representative of the Secretary-General with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement of the dispute.

20. The expansion and diversification of peace-keeping operations had far-reaching consequences for both the organization and the conduct of such operations. With respect to the control and command of the operations, the Namibia model might be suggested whereby a civilian, in the capacity of special representative of the Secretary-General, would command a mission that comprised civilian, military and political elements. The new tasks which peace-keepers were required to perform, such as electoral supervision, had made it necessary to consider the possible use of civilians to do tasks currently performed by military personnel, such as vehicle and equipment maintenance, medical assistance and communications. However, the cost of peace-keeping operations involving civilians, was much higher than that of more traditional operations.

21. In view of those considerations, there was clearly a need to redefine the concept of peace-keeping operations in light of their expansion and diversification. For the moment, however, his delegation had some reservations on the establishment of general guidelines, which could deprive the United Nations of the flexibility required to meet the needs of future operations.

22. Another important aspect of the subject was preventive diplomacy, which had acquired special significance following the conflict in the Gulf and in light of the occurrences in Yugoslavia and the potential for similar conflicts in other regions. The United Nations would be judged by the manner in which it discharged its principal responsibility, which was to prevent wars, contain conflicts and promote dialogue between nations. Despite the improvement in the climate of international relations, deep-seated political, economic, social, ethnic and religious rivalries still remained in the world and were represented within the United Nations. A potentially destabilizing climate of uncertainty still prevailed; in the view of his delegation, adequately structured preventive diplomacy could contribute to the establishment of an effective system of collective security, and the Committee should therefore continue its efforts towards that end. In that regard, his delegation shared the position adopted by the European Community on the draft Declaration on Fact-finding and fully supported the proposals submitted by the Nordic Governments in the document entitled "Shaping the peace: The United Nations in the 1990s".

23. Also interesting was the Soviet proposal reproduced in annex II of the Special Committee's report which pointed out, inter alia, that peace-keeping operations did not amount to a substitute for the pacific settlement of disputes and were therefore of a temporary nature, and brought out the fact that peace-keeping and peacemaking missions were complementary. In some exceptional instances, of course, as in the case of the United Nations

(Mr. Holger, Chile)

Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a peace-keeping mission was forced to remain in place for an unduly long time because of an impasse in the peace negotiations.

24. His delegation also welcomed the inclusion in draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.9 of a preambular paragraph recognizing peacemaking activities as an important means for maintaining international peace and security.

25. Close cooperation between the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and the corresponding Secretariat units was essential. The participation of Secretariat officials in the Special Committee's deliberations had added substance to the discussions and to its subsequent report. His delegation believed the Special Committee should meet more frequently during the year to enable it to deal with any urgent matters that might arise.

26. Chile intended to continue taking part in peace-keeping operations, as it had done or was doing in Palestine, India and Pakistan, Western Sahara, and Iraq and Kuwait.

27. Mr. KA (Senegal) observed that even in the new world order, peace-keeping missions would not become less frequent, because of various existing conflicts and the constant possibility of further conflagrations. The international community's action must now focus above all on mechanisms to prevent conflicts. The current climate that had so strengthened the capability, authority and credibility of the United Nations would also revitalize the mandates and objectives of the increasingly complex and diversified peace-keeping operations.

28. Senegal had been participating in such operations since 1960, in the Congo and later in Lebanon, Iran and Iraq, Iraq and Kuwait, and Cambodia. It was also currently involved in the regional peace-keeping operation in Liberia sponsored by the West African Economic Community.

29. His delegation particularly welcomed the recommendations in the Special Committee's report (A/46/254, para. 79) having to do with peace-keeping training and the designation of a focal unit for training, although they would require a good degree of coordination. Senegal also supported draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.9.

30. Peace-keeping operations should be placed on a sounder financial basis and Member States should fulfil their collective responsibility to contribute, in keeping with article 17 of the Charter. Those States with the means to do so should make supplementary voluntary contributions, both financial and logistical.

31. Senegal commended the Secretary-General's efforts to involve as many States as possible in the peace-keeping operations, the Namibian experience

(Mr. Ka, Senegal)

being an excellent example. To that end, the Secretariat should try to resolve the language-related problems that limited participation for some countries. The adoption of a model agreement between the United Nations and Member States contributing personnel to peace-keeping operations would also facilitate matters.

32. The concept of conflict prevention should be part of any approach to peace-keeping operations. An early-warning system should allow the United Nations, by virtue of the mandates of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, to send preventive diplomacy missions into areas of imminent conflict. A firm stand in favour of restraint taken by the international community towards the potential antagonists would defuse tension. The Organization had not yet fully used the possibilities offered by the Charter for conflict prevention, particularly under Articles 34, 35, and 99.

33. Senegal wished to pay tribute to the memory of all the men and women who had fallen in the service of peace.

34. Mr. BOUKADOUM (Algeria) observed that peace-keeping operations had expanded beyond their traditional role, reflecting the evolution of the very concept of maintaining and promoting peace. The operations launched in 1991 or about to be launched were a good illustration of that evolution. UNIKOM, for instance, did more than provide the usual buffer between forces in conflict; ONUSAL was being asked to monitor an agreement between political forces in a single State; the second United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) was monitoring elections in a Member State and ensuring the implementation of a national reconciliation accord, as was MINURSO; the striking originality of the mandate and structure of the United Nations Observer Group for the Verification of the Elections in Haita (ONUVEH) had profound implications for the rules, principles and objectives of peace-keeping operations; and the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) was without a doubt a turning point because of its size, financial implications and political responsibilities, which amounted to nothing less than the provisional administration of a territory pending the organization of United Nations-supervised elections. Even bolder suggestions were being advanced, such as using peace-keeping operations to prevent conflicts, or using them in entirely new fields. The Charter itself made no specific reference to peace-keeping operations per se but only to threats to international peace and security. Article 1 of the Charter, however, dealt with conflict prevention, as did Articles 33 and 99. The Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations was the proper forum for arriving at a consensus on the possible extension of the concept of peace-keeping.

35. His delegation's own views on the subject were, first, that the preventive use of a peace-keeping operation in a troubled area, in the form of an early-warning or observation mission, presupposed the declaration of the area as one of potential conflict, which raised the question of who would have

(Mr. Boukadoum, Algeria)

the authority to make such a declaration. Secondly, such an operation would require the consent of the parties concerned and would have to respect their sovereignty and integrity. Thirdly, conflict prevention would require data collection and data analysis for early-warning purposes, a kind of system that the Secretariat was not yet equipped to manage and would therefore require structural changes. Fourthly, the flexibility demanded would entail reserves of manpower and equipment, and the prior consent of the Security Council, before any deployment. Algeria believed that the first step should be to strengthen the powers of the Secretary-General, making full use of the provisions of Articles 33 and 99 of the Charter.

36. Peace-keeping operations must be temporary and go hand in hand with the search for political solutions. Otherwise, they could impose an intolerable burden on contributing States and the United Nations budget and might serve to maintain an unjust and explosive status quo. The Middle East was a case in point. A decisive factor in effective peace-keeping operations was the consent of the parties concerned, but another requisite was their political will to contribute to the success of the operation and facilitate deployment.

37. In order to put the financing of peace-keeping operations on a solid financial footing, Member States should pay their assessments in full, in compliance with Article 17 of the Charter. The current method of calculating the assessments should be maintained, account being taken of the particular responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council and the developed countries' ability to pay.

38. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to an aide mémoire circulated by Canada for the information of delegations regarding its peace-keeping training.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
16th meeting
held on
Monday, 4 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)

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AGENDA ITEM 71: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 71: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (A/46/20 and A/46/389)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/46/20) and to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/46/389). He also drew attention to document A/46/92, containing a letter from Argentina, dated 19 February 1991, which pertained to the agenda item.

2. In recent years, the easing of tensions between East and West and between North and South had brought about increased international cooperation in outer space, where the use of advanced technology required prompt responses to new developments. The improved international climate had been reflected in the recent achievements of the Committee and its Subcommittees, such as the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. For its part, the General Assembly had endorsed the designation of 1992 as International Space Year. The Committee had urged Member States and international organizations to consider supporting additional scientific and technical activities, in cooperation with the United Nations, and to increase voluntary contributions with a view to supporting the activities to be carried out through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

3. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria), speaking as Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and introducing the report of the Committee on the work of its thirty-fourth session, held at Graz, Austria (A/46/20), said that the Committee's work had covered four main areas: ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes; the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its twenty-eighth session, including the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82), contained in document A/AC.105/483; the report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirtieth session, contained in document A/AC.105/484; and the review of the current status of spin-off benefits of space technology.

4. The Committee had, as a matter of priority, considered the item "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes", and had been of the view that the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/72 reflected the continuing concern of the international community and the need to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, taking into account the needs of developing countries. The Committee had agreed that a good way to broaden and to deepen such international cooperation would be through international and regional programmes undertaken as part of universal endeavours such as International Space Year in 1992. The Committee had dealt with priority items, including the United Nations Programme on Space

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Applications and the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system, remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, and the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

5. With regard to financial questions, he said that, despite contributions from Governments and agencies, the financial resources available to the Programme remained limited; accordingly, some concerned Member States had requested that voluntary contributions should be increased.

6. On the question of remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, the Committee had recognized the importance of continuing international efforts to ensure the continuity, the compatibility and the complementarity of remote-sensing systems and to promote cooperation in that area through regular meetings between satellite operators, ground station operators and users. The Committee had urged countries and agencies to continue the free distribution of meteorological information, a practice which had been recognized as an example of international cooperation.

7. The Committee had taken note once more that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had discussed the use of nuclear power sources in outer space on a priority basis. While the Working Group on that question had not met during the 1991 session of the Subcommittee, delegations had continued to express their views on the subject in both the Subcommittee and the Committee. The Committee had endorsed the recommendations of the Subcommittee that Member States should be invited to report to the Secretary-General on a regular basis on that question; that further studies should be conducted on the problem of the collision of nuclear power sources with space debris; that the Subcommittee should be kept informed of the results of such studies; and that the Subcommittee should, where appropriate, reconvene the Working Group in order to continue work on the subject.

8. Other items discussed by the Subcommittee and the Committee had included space transportation systems; the examination of the physical nature and the technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine; the progress made in the geosphere-biosphere (global change) programme; matters relating to planetary exploration; and matters relating to astronomy. The Committee had recommended that those items should be retained on the Subcommittee's agenda.

9. The Committee had endorsed the recommendation that the new theme fixed for special attention at the 1992 session of the Subcommittee should be: "Space technology and the protection of the Earth's environment: development of endogenous capabilities, in particular in the developing countries and in the context of International Space Year". The Committee had also endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee's that the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Aeronautical Federation (IAF) should be invited to arrange a symposium on that theme, in cooperation with and under the guidance of Member States. The Committee had expressed its appreciation to

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

COSPAR and IAF for their generous support of the Subcommittee and for the symposium which they had conducted on the 1991 theme.

10. The Committee had agreed that there was a need for further research concerning space debris, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on that subject. The Committee had further agreed that, in order to enable the Subcommittee to follow the question more closely, information on national research on the item should, to the extent possible, be provided to the Subcommittee. The Committee had also noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 45/72, had considered that space debris could be an appropriate subject of discussion by the Committee in the future.

11. With regard to the work of the Legal Subcommittee at its thirtieth session, he said that the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space had resumed its work and had considered in detail the elaboration of draft principles in that field, with the aim of finalizing the draft set of principles. Among the draft principles discussed were a new version of draft principle 4 on safety assessment, which combined the provisions of the former draft principles 2 and 4; draft principle 7 on assistance to States; draft principle 8 on responsibility; draft principle 9 on liability and compensation; draft principle 11, which had been deleted by consensus; and draft principle 12 on revision. He hoped that the Subcommittee would finalize the draft set of principles in time for their adoption by the General Assembly in 1992, so that they might serve as a United Nations contribution to the activities of International Space Year.

12. The Subcommittee had, through its Working Group, continued its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit. A "working non-paper" prepared by a number of countries members of the Group of 77 had given rise to an exchange of views. The Chairman of the Working Group had noted that the document was a step in the right direction and would serve as a basis for future debate. He himself hoped that that would be the case, because, in 1990, the Committee had been obliged to inform the General Assembly that the Subcommittee and its Working Group had made no concrete recommendations on that item. The Committee had recommended that the Legal Subcommittee should continue its consideration of the item at its next session.

13. The Working Group set up by the Legal Subcommittee to consider the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries, had met for the first time. The report of the Working Group reflected the diverse views of the Member States on that topic. That represented an excellent beginning, since the inclusion of the item on the agenda and the establishment of the Working Group had been the result of many years of negotiations. The Committee had noted that some Member States, in response to two notes verbale from the Secretary-General, had provided the

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Austria)

Subcommittee with information relating to that agenda item and that the Working Group had requested its Chairman to prepare, for the next session of the Subcommittee, to be held in 1992, a paper summarizing in an analytical manner the views and information contained in those responses.

14. With regard to the spin-off benefits of space technology, he stressed the applications in the fields of medicine and industry, which underlined the importance of international cooperation in that field among all countries, particularly developing countries. The Committee had accordingly felt that there was a need to strengthen international cooperation by improving access to the spin-off benefits of space technology, in particular, those benefits which were relevant to the social and economic needs of the developing countries.

15. Political, economic and technical developments highlighted the increasing need for international cooperation. It was to be hoped that the celebration in 1992 of International Space Year would lead to an increase in such cooperation.

16. Mr. POSSO (Ecuador) said that, despite a certain lack of action on the part of the Committee, the countries of the third world were hoping that international cooperation and solidarity would provide them with access to the spin-off benefits of space technology and enable them to use the resources of outer space. One of the major stumbling blocks in that regard was the use of science and technology for militaristic and destructive purposes, not only by the super-Powers but also by medium-sized and small Powers.

17. From a purely militaristic perspective, outer space offered unlimited possibilities; accordingly, it was important to stress that outer space must be used strictly for peaceful purposes. The efforts of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space did not appear to be adequate to meet the expectations of the international community, in particular those of the third world countries. In fact, despite the substantial achievements by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, there had been no significant increase in international space activities, especially in the developing countries; on the contrary, there had been an increase in risks for mankind.

18. In view of those facts, his delegation believed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should intensify its efforts in areas basic to international cooperation. His delegation was also very concerned at the lack of even the tiniest progress in defining the rules for the delimitation of outer space and the utilization of the geostationary orbit. The issue of the geostationary orbit was of particular importance to his country because the orbit had the particular characteristic of being a limited and exhaustible natural resource.

19. In that connection, his country wished to reaffirm its position on the 1967 Treaty, which did not govern the utilization of the orbit and did not even mention it; his Government believed that it was necessary to elaborate a

(Mr. Posso, Ecuador)

special legal regime for the orbit, prohibiting its exclusive exploitation by States which had the necessary financial and technical capabilities but which did not recognize the rights of the equatorial States. Similarly, given the goal of a rational utilization of frequency spectrum, the preferential right of the equatorial States to access to the synchronous geostationary orbit could no longer be denied. His country naturally agreed that the interests of the developing countries must correspond to those of the international community.

20. Finally, he stressed that the legal regime to regulate utilization of the geostationary orbit should be established by the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space rather than by the International Telecommunication Union, which was a technical body and was not qualified to analyse the full ramifications of the issue. His Government reaffirmed its willingness to consider any new or compromise formula, provided that it was based on the equitable use of orbital resources and took into account the special interests of the equatorial countries and their preferential rights of access to the orbit.

21. Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that since the elaboration in 1967 of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had produced a number of international conventions and sets of principles and the Twelve had participated actively in that work. The main point of the deliberations on agenda item 71 was to enable the Committee to draft a resolution which would define its mandate. The Twelve hoped that the General Assembly would adopt that resolution by consensus as it had in previous years,

22. In spite of the progress made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, agreement had yet to be reached on the text of some of the principles relating to nuclear power sources. He hoped that a constructive solution to that problem could be found in 1992.

23. He had noted with satisfaction that the public was becoming increasingly aware that outer space was of vital importance for Mother Earth. In that connection he referred to resolution 44/46, in which the General Assembly had endorsed the initiative to designate 1992 as International Space Year, which would play an important role in educating both the public and Governments about the space and Earth environment and about the way they interrelated. The European Community welcomed the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that the Year should be regarded as an opportunity to enhance international cooperation for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and, in particular, the developing countries.

24. The States members of the European Community which were members of the European Space Agency were organizing a conference in Munich in April 1992 based on the theme of space in the service of the changing Earth. In addition, the members of the European Community would be organizing national activities in order to make a further contribution to the success of the Year.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

25. The focus of the activities of the Year would be on the uses of space technology for both the study and monitoring of the environment; such an approach would be particularly useful for the developing countries in so far as the studies might make it possible to find solutions to such problems as soil erosion and pollution. The issue was being treated as a priority item on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

26. The international community must ensure that the utilization of outer space did not cause pollution. On the issue of space debris, the European Community had noted with satisfaction that awareness of the scope of the problem had been growing worldwide, and welcomed the invitation to provide technical information to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

27. Outer space must be used for peaceful purposes and for the well-being of mankind; it was for other United Nations organs to examine the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

28. In conclusion, he expressed his satisfaction at the improvement of the climate which surrounded the work of the Outer Space Committee as well as at the good will shown by all delegations during its deliberations.

29. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria), after expressing his satisfaction that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had reached consensus on two additional draft principles on the use of nuclear power in outer space, urged the Subcommittee to make every effort to arrive at a final text as early as possible. The debate on the new item in the Subcommittee and its Working Group had been a good start. Future work should be guided by the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all States.

30. Austrian efforts in space research and technology had been highlighted on 2 October with the launch of the first Austrian cosmonaut in a cooperative programme with the Soviet Union. The project, called Austromir, involved the performance of 14 experiments in space medicine and physics in conditions of weightlessness on board the Soviet space station Mir for a period lasting six days. Those experiments and the necessary hardware had been developed at various Austrian university institutes in close cooperation with a number of industrial companies. Preliminary data indicated that subsequent data analysis would yield interesting scientific results. That first flight of an Austrian cosmonaut in space was certainly a landmark in the history of Austrian science and high technology.

AGENDA ITEM 74: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/SPC/46/L.9 and L.10)

31. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to document A/SPC/46/L.10, containing the Secretary-General's statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.9.

32. Mr. KIRSCH (Canada), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.9, said that the preambular section was unchanged from General Assembly resolution 45/75, with the exception of technical updates and some short references. It contained a paragraph on United Nations peace-making activities and the essential function those activities performed in the maintenance of international peace and security. The paragraph represented a response to a request from the Secretary-General to provide the Fifth Committee with a proper legislative basis to examine and allocate appropriate financial resources to his peace-making activities, which had expanded as a result of the improvement in international relations.

33. The operative part of the draft resolution had been derived from the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the Special Committee and was divided into six numbered sections. The first section took note of the report of the Special Committee. The next four sections corresponded to the four broad areas - resources, financing, institutional issues and other issues - which had been considered by the Special Committee. The last section referred to the Special Committee's future activities and methods of work.

34. Two technical changes should be made in the text of the draft resolution. The first concerned paragraph 11, where the brackets should be removed, as the numbers between them corresponded to the 45 Member States which had replied to the Secretary-General's questionnaire. Regarding the second change, he had been informed that, in the fifth preambular paragraph of the Spanish text, the word "peace-making" had been translated by the word "mantenimiento", when it should have read "establecimiento". The translation into the other languages might perhaps be reviewed in order to ensure that the correct terminology was used in all languages.

35. The CHAIRMAN suggested that document A/SPC/46/L.10 should be considered and a decision taken on it later.

36. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
17th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 5 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SCHAFER (Germany)
(Vice-Chairman)

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AGENDA ITEM 71: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)

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A/SPC/46/SR.17
19 November 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

91-57082 5268S (E)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Schafer (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 71: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued) (A/46/20 and A/46/389)

1. Mr. KOUPRIYAN (Ukraine) said that radical changes had taken place in international relations which had contributed to encouraging confidence on the basis of international law. The conquest of space would be achieved only through the joint efforts of the international community backed by a world centre, like the United Nations, capable of affecting events.

2. During the current year, the international community had celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of mankind's first space flight, and in 1992 it would celebrate International Space Year. He hoped that those events would contribute to a further qualitative improvement in the peaceful uses of outer space.

3. His country had considerable technical and scientific capabilities, and great experience in rocket technology. Moreover, it was preparing apparatus and instruments for the construction of large structures in outer space. In recent years it had made great progress in remote sensing of Earth and the oceans from space. That experience would enable it to apply the concept of a common geo-co-informational system, the purpose of which was the preservation and monitoring of the environment. His country's experts were also taking an active part in the monitoring of seismic activities and earthquake forecasting as well as in work related to space biology. It was prepared to cooperate with other countries and to share the results of its research.

4. His country considered the remote sensing of Earth a highly important area of cooperation and therefore favoured an international project for the peaceful use of the results of world remote sensing of Earth. That project had ecological and meteorological applications.

5. In connection with International Space Year, during the current year a conference on space museums had been held in Zhitomir and a new space exposition had been inaugurated. In addition, the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences had proposed that a scientific seminar for foreign experts, particularly from developing countries, should be held on new methods of remote sensing. The Space Research Committee of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences had also accepted requests for fellowships and study trips for experts from the developing countries interested in space studies.

6. In spite of the progress achieved, there was a threat of the militarization of outer space. It must be prevented at all costs. For that reason, his country favoured the establishment of an International Space Directorate to monitor activities in space.

(Mr. Koupriyan, Ukraine)

7. It also supported the establishment of contacts between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament, as the exploration of outer space had both military and non-military implications.

8. His country attached great importance to the consolidation of legal norms on space, which would reduce the possibility of tension and conflicts. It was therefore concerned at the lack of progress in the preparation of principles on nuclear energy sources in outer space, a problem which could be solved by the good will of States. Among other questions which required constructive effort, mention should be made of the delimitation of outer space and a legal regime for the geostationary orbit in the interests of all countries.

9. Mr. NOREEN (Sweden), referring to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, said that it would be highly desirable for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to continue to provide expert services to the Committee and its two subcommittees, and felt that the Legal Subcommittee should make every effort to complete the draft principles on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space at its next session.

10. Remote sensing was of fundamental importance for monitoring the Earth's environment, in particular for studying and monitoring global change. Remote sensing played a central role in the activities proposed for the International Space Year in 1992. The International Space Year activities of the United Nations would essentially be executed through the Space Applications Programme, which to a large degree was dependent on voluntary contributions. As such a contribution, Sweden would in 1992 for the second time act as host to a United Nations training course on remote-sensing education for educators.

11. Space technology was an important instrument for protecting the Earth's environment, but if space itself was polluted its exploration would be jeopardized. For that reason, the General Assembly had recommended that more attention should be paid to the protection and preservation of the outer space environment. As the discussions in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had demonstrated, there was growing international concern over the issue of space debris, an issue which should be addressed through international cooperation.

12. Mr. FAWZY (Egypt) said that the progress made in space technology, with its double-edged nature entailing both military and civilian implications, highlighted the need to safeguard outer space against an arms race. That ambivalence underscored the relevance of the concerns of the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on Outer Space, whose ultimate objective was to maintain outer space for peaceful uses. It was therefore necessary to amend article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, which implicitly allowed for deployment of some weapons in outer space while prohibiting such deployment on the moon or other celestial bodies.

(Mr. Fawzy, Egypt)

13. It was the purpose of the Committee to promote international cooperation; accordingly, the presence of experts should be fully utilized not simply as a vehicle of information exchange but rather to contribute to international cooperation on outer space. Regarding the work of the Legal Subcommittee, his delegation hoped that agreement would soon be reached on the conclusion of a set of principles on the use of nuclear power sources and the role of IAEA in that regard. It also hoped for positive results from the discussions in that Subcommittee on the benefits of space technology. The exchange of information on that subject should help the countries with less space capabilities to develop their own capabilities.

14. His delegation considered it imperative to reach agreement on the delimitation of outer space. Regarding the geostationary orbit, emphasis should be maintained on ways and means of ensuring rational and equitable use and access to it through the establishment of a special legal regime.

15. Space debris was also a concern for his delegation, and it welcomed the increased emphasis given to the issue in the Committee. It felt, also, that a generic relationship existed between the work of the Conference on Disarmament and that of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as the issues they dealt with were intertwined; permanent contacts should therefore be established between the two bodies.

16. Mr. KHAMI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was important because it enabled all Member States, whatever their level of development, to benefit from the progress of science and technology in that field. It must therefore be pointed out that although the great progress made in the exploration of outer space had had beneficial consequences for the industrialized countries which had the relevant technological capacities, that had not happened in most of the developing countries. From that point of view, his delegation hoped that the developing countries would be given assistance, particularly with respect to remote sensing and its applications, by means of training activities and greater access to technology, information and space images.

17. His delegation was convinced that all countries should use outer space for peaceful purposes and cooperate in all the activities related to such use. That, together with the good will of all parties, would ensure that the interests of all nations were served. It would also help to avoid conflicts on outer space questions.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
18th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 6 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SCHAFER (Germany)
(Vice-Chairman)

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AGENDA ITEM 71: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)

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20 November 1991
ENGLISH
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91-57112 5278S (E)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Schafer (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 71: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued) (A/46/20 and A/46/389)

1. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that the holding in Chile of the Second Space Conference of the Americas in 1992 underscored Chile's interest in encouraging and promoting regional cooperation in the spirit of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) and the goals of International Space Year.

2. It was in the field of outer space that the differences between the countries which created and therefore possessed advanced technology and the countries which used that technology were perhaps most marked, in spite of the fact that the development of both groups of countries was closely interrelated and dependent on such technology in crucial areas such as communications and the discovery of natural resources. In general, the developed countries took an active part in the Committee's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee while the developing countries, which lacked space technology, expressed their views and had more scope for stating their needs, aspirations and interests in the Legal Subcommittee. The development of international space law was the most viable way for those countries to gain access to such technology. On their behalf, his delegation appealed to States Members of the United Nations to reestablish the principle of international cooperation on juster and more equitable bases by means of a normative framework which would enable developing countries to participate more actively in space technology and its applications.

3. During the past year progress had been made on substantive questions relating to the negotiations on the peaceful uses of outer space. In the case of the geostationary orbit, the Group of 77 had submitted an innovative proposal containing important ideas which, his delegation hoped, would lead to active and productive discussion focused on the concept of equitable access to the geostationary orbit. Important progress had also been made with respect to the new item, "Consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries." A working paper submitted by the Group of 77 had put forward the idea that principles should be worked out in specific areas of international cooperation to make them effective. In addition, the relationship between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space had been clarified, and the Conference itself had underscored the need to establish contacts between the two bodies. His delegation had therefore proposed that

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

the Conference on Disarmament should be asked to prepare a report on the number of meetings and the progress made by the Ad Hoc Committee and that the proceedings and records of the Conference with respect to outer space and its peaceful uses should be circulated to the Committee.

4. The Discovery shuttle had recently been forced to evade some of the dangerous debris that existed in outer space, a fact which underscored the need to study that subject and to give it the priority it deserved. His delegation appealed to those countries that doubted the political and technical importance of the question to reconsider their position in order to make possible substantive and productive discussion of it.

5. Lastly, his delegation considered that account should be taken in the new world order of the legitimate aspirations of all United Nations Member States to juster living conditions in conformity with the United Nations Charter. From that point of view, outer space should be used for peaceful purposes and for the benefit and in the interests of all, taking into particular account the developing countries.

6. Mr. HERNANDEZ BASAVE (Mexico) said that the end of the cold war made it possible to hope that the international community would be able to progress towards the consolidation of a stable system of peace and security; to do so it would be necessary to overcome the great economic and social disparities between the developed world and the developing peoples. Recent political events had created a general awareness of the need to reactivate the United Nations and his delegation reiterated its firm commitment to contribute to the strengthening of the Organization's role.

7. His delegation regretted that two United Nations bodies in which questions relating to the use of outer space, the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, had not yet benefited from the new reactivation efforts. The question of the militarization of outer space had been a priority subject for almost a decade in both bodies. In neither of them, however, had it been possible to begin serious and substantive work to reserve outer space exclusively for peaceful uses, while its militarization continued at an accelerated rate. It was anomalous that the improvement of the world situation had not brought with it the political will to move towards the complete demilitarization of outer space and a guarantee that it would be used exclusively for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind and to promote effective international cooperation for development. That was the spirit which should guide the Committee's work.

8. His delegation was concerned at the little progress made in recent years in the Committee's two Subcommittees. In the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee no progress had been made on practically any of the agenda items except that of the use of nuclear energy sources in outer space. Nor had much attention been paid to the application of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

(Mr. Hernandez Basave, Mexico)

9. However, his delegation acknowledged the efforts made by the Outer Space Division to promote programmes of multilateral cooperation on space subjects. In spite of its scant financial resources, the Programme on Space Applications had held important courses and seminars, contributing to the training of scientists and technicians in the developing countries.

10. His delegation attached particular importance to the General Assembly's recommendation that regional training centres in space science and technology should be established. During the Committee's thirty-fourth session, Mexico had announced its offer to provide the site for the Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean in the offices of the Mexican Institute of Communications, a subsidiary of the Communications and Transport Secretariat which, inter alia, coordinated Mexican space activities. The Institute was designing a new satellite system which would cover various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, facilitating their access to data banks.

11. His delegation supported the recommendation made by the General Assembly that the Committee give greater attention to questions relating to the protection of the space environment. It therefore reiterated its support of Sweden's proposal that the Committee begin its consideration of the item on space debris.

12. Extremely limited progress had been made during 1991 in the work of the Legal Subcommittee on the development of international space law. The negotiations on the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit remained at a standstill, and it had not been possible to conclude the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. He hoped that the necessary political will would be forthcoming to enable the Committee to submit a final text on the question to the General Assembly in 1992.

13. The machinery for and means of ensuring the equitable distribution of the benefits derived from space activities would be more effective if the principle contained in article I of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies were respected. His country, together with other members of the Group of 77, had proposed that principles should be drawn up concerning international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space in order to promote such cooperation and ensure that the benefits derived from space activities were distributed fairly and in such a way as to assist all peoples in their efforts to achieve economic and social development.

14. The current international political situation required a change in attitude in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations, and space activities were a sector which could serve to promote international cooperation. With that in view, the holding of International Space Year in 1992 should help to revitalize the Committee's work.

15. Mr. MAHMOOD (Pakistan) said that the militarization of outer space was a serious impediment to its use for peaceful purposes. Consideration of that issue in the Outer Space Committee could serve to supplement the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

16. He welcomed the fact that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications had expanded in scope over the years. However, despite repeated appeals, the Programme did not have the necessary funds to meet the essential requirements of developing countries. His own country had made a regular financial contribution to the Programme since 1984.

17. He hoped that the evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would lead to a further improvement in the execution of the various activities concerning international cooperation in the field in question. Closer coordination was needed on the programmes undertaken by the various agencies in the United Nations system concerning space technology applications, taking into account the needs of the developing countries.

18. His country attached particular importance to international cooperation in the field of remote sensing. It was concerned at the excessive commercialization of remote-sensing activities and services offered by the satellite-operating States, which served to discourage participation by developing countries because of the high costs involved. Developed and developing countries needed to share relevant information and technology.

19. Pakistan was disappointed that the Legal Subcommittee had been unable to complete its consideration of the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space at its thirtieth session, and hoped that the Subcommittee would be able to reach a consensus on the remaining principles at its following session. It was essential to establish an international legal regime for outer space, which must be distinguished from the legal regime for national airspace. The concept of outer space must first be clearly defined, however.

20. It was vital for all States to have equitable and fair access to the geostationary orbit, without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union. In view of the unique and limited nature of the geostationary orbit, a special legal regime should be established to guarantee its availability to all nations, taking particular account of the needs of developing countries, which should be given preferential treatment.

21. A further matter of major concern to the international community was the need to find a way of removing space debris and satellites from the geostationary orbit. The problem needed to be solved by scientific and technological means, and the launching States had to exercise the necessary restraint. It was therefore extremely important that the Outer Space Committee should continue its consideration of the question.

22. Mr. EXARCHOS (Greece) said that his country had participated actively in the work of the Outer Space Committee and its two subcommittees. Together with other Member States and various international and regional organizations, Greece would continue to work towards strengthening, expanding and promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

23. In its resolution 44/46 of 8 December 1989, the General Assembly had endorsed the participation of the United Nations in International Space Year. In view of the importance of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, his Government had made a voluntary contribution of $US 7,000 to the relevant trust fund.

24. His Government was organizing an international seminar on space communication systems, particularly on applications of INMARSAT for the benefit of States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). Greece had also held a national essay competition, and the entries selected had been submitted to the Outer Space Affairs Division. It had furthermore developed educational programmes covering various space applications for use in universities, where the main focus would be on geological and agricultural applications of remote sensing, as well as for use in government departments and agencies - where the main applications would be satellite communications and meteorology - particularly at the Hellenic Telecommunications Agency, which managed the ground stations and administered the country's participation in INTELSAT, INMARSAT and EUTELSAT, and at the National Meteorological Service, which ran a graduate meteorology school for its staff, including courses on satellite meteorology.

25. Accordingly, Greece attached great importance to the development of space law and had ratified such international legal instruments as the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, signed on 5 August 1963 and ratified by Act 4335/1963, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, signed on 27 January 1967 and ratified by Decree 670/1970, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, signed on 22 April 1968 and ratified by Decree 189/1974, and the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects, signed on 29 March 1972 and ratified by Act 563/1977.

26. The Greek Government had initiated the process for accession to the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, adopted by the General Assembly on 12 November 1974.

27. Mr. LE KHAC TRUNG (Viet Nam) said that in the past 30 years technological developments in the field of outer space had progressed enormously; the world was currently entering an era in which space science would exert an even greater influence on living conditions and quality of life. While outer space had tremendous scientific and economic potential, it could also pose a fatal threat to mankind, because attempts were still being made to extend the arms

(Mr. Le Khac Trung, Viet Nam)

race into outer space; that would have an adverse effect on international relations and would entail the squandering of large amounts of resources which were urgently needed for development.

28. Unfortunately, the debates on ways of maintaining outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes and on the question of safe use of nuclear power sources in outer space had not yet yielded the hoped-for results.

29. A distinction must be drawn between the legal regime governing airspace and the legal regime governing outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit must be defined. He expressed the hope that the international community would soon be in a position to draft the new space law and the legal regime on the utilization of the geostationary orbit in the interest of all countries.

30. The spin-off benefits of space technology and remote-sensing information played a very important role in social and economic development. Accordingly, they should be made available to the developing countries in the spirit of true international cooperation.

31. Currently no part of the globe was immune from serious deterioration of the environment which threatened social and economic development and the very existence of mankind. Mindful of that threat, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was scheduled to meet in Rio de Janeiro within six months. It was gratifying to see that the activities of International Space Year would focus in large part on the use of space technology to study and monitor the environment. In that connection, Viet Nam supported the proposal that the question of space debris should be considered in the future deliberations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

32. Viet Nam attached the utmost importance to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and to the efforts of the Outer Space Affairs Division to develop an international space information system. In that connection he pointed out that the programme of the National Committee for Space Research and Applications, which had been established in Viet Nam in 1980, assigned high priority to remote sensing. At the same time, within the context of the INTERCOSMOS programme, some airborne experiments had been carried out using multispectral cameras for data analysis to serve the national economy and development planning. In connection with a UNDP/FAO project, facilities for visual interpretation techniques had been set up and some ground stations had been installed to receive cloud pictures from meteorological satellites.

33. Space activities had brought with them tremendous achievements for human civilization and had come to form part of the daily lives of millions of people. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had made a considerable contribution to those developments. However, not much progress had been made on legal matters and, as a result, existing international instruments did not, as yet, provide an appropriate framework for space activities.

(Mr. Le Khac Trung, Viet Nam)

34. He hoped that the end of the cold war and the possibility that confrontation in international relations would be replaced by cooperation, would encourage all States to surmount the remaining differences and pave the way for more effective international cooperation in the exploration and utilization of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes.

35. Mr. MOTOMURA (Japan), noting that some progress had been made on the draft principles on nuclear power sources in outer space, expressed the hope that the remaining principles could be finalized and that consensus could be reached as soon as possible on the draft principles as a whole.

36. It was gratifying to note that the working group on the new item entitled "spin-off benefits of space technology", had begun its substantive work; he hoped that that important item would give rise to a fruitful exchange of views based on specific information on existing national legal frameworks and international agreements.

37. With respect to space environment, the problem of the rapid accumulation of debris in outer space posed a serious threat to space and Earth environment and to future space activities. He urged members of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to share the findings obtained from their national research programmes with one another. In that regard, his delegation agreed that the issue of space debris should be placed on the agenda of the Scientific and Legal Subcommittee, so as to provide an opportunity for exchanging views and information derived from national research.

38. There were two aspects of space technology - nuclear power sources and remote sensing - and since an accident involving a satellite with a nuclear power source on board could have lethal consequences for the Earth's ecology and the human environment, his delegation welcomed the Committee's decision to endorse the Subcommittee's recommendation that the new theme to be given special attention at its 1992 session should be "Space technology and the protection of the Earth's environment".

39. His delegation also welcomed the initiative of international scientific organizations and bodies in designating 1992 International Space Year (ISY), for that would provide a suitable opportunity to enhance international cooperation and ensure that all countries, particularly the developing countries, benefited from the exploration and utilization of outer space. In close collaboration with the United Nations and other relevant organizations the Government of Japan was to be a co-sponsor of the United Nations Regional Workshop on Space Technology for Resource Development and Environment Management, in Quito, Ecuador. It would also host a conference on earth/space science and technology to be held in Tokyo in the autumn of 1992 as part of the ISY activities in the Asian and Pacific region, with the participation of some 1,000 experts from all the countries of the region. The activities planned for Tokyo in 1992 included a seminar on the utilization of remote-sensing technology for disaster prevention and training courses on remote-sensing technology and satellite-communications engineering.

(Mr. Motomura, Japan)

40. It was to be hoped that, taking advantage of the favourable conditions resulting from the easing of tensions in international relations, the General Assembly would adopt by consensus the draft resolution designed to enhance the work of COPUOS and its two Subcommittees.

41. Mr. NEUHAUS (Australia) said that in 1967, only 10 years after the launch of Sputnik, Australia had become the third country in the world, after the Soviet Union and the United States, to launch a satellite into orbit from its own territory and it had remained a leader in radio astronomy, deep-space tracking, remote sensing, and many other areas. It had been providing ground support for satellite-based communications; since 1958 the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had had ground stations in Australia, as had the European Space Agency more recently. The INTELSAT ground station at Perth used mostly Australian technology, and Australian companies had contracts for the INTELSAT Pacific and Indian Ocean satellites. It was hoped that "Endeavour", the Australian experimental ultraviolet telescope, which was the most sophisticated piece of Australian space technology, would be launched into space in January 1992 on board the NASA space shuttle Discovery.

42. In the area of remote sensing, Australia had supplied equipment for the European ERS-1 satellite, was making a major investment in installations to receive data from that satellite, and was building additional equipment for ERS-2. It was also making a major investment in the Tasmanian earth-resources satellite station at Hobart, which would enable ERS-1 to collect data from a much larger area, including the southern part of the Indian Ocean and the Tasman Sea. Remote sensing was one of the most promising of all the possible peaceful uses of outer space.

43. As part of International Space Year his country planned to host important programmes for the study of land-cover change, as well as projects on sea-surface temperature and the productivity of the oceans; it intended to contribute to those activities and supply data for the programmes on the encyclopaedia and atlas of global change, as well as participating as an investigator in the Topex-Poseidon ocean topography satellite project. It would also be cooperating with the Soviet Union in the Radioastron project.

44. Turning to the thirty-fourth session of COPUOS, held in Graz, he said that it was important to continue the effort to achieve consensus among the participating countries. Since the Chernobyl accident the world had a greater duty than ever before to observe stringent safety standards in the matter of nuclear power sources. With regard to the draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, it was disappointing that agreement had still not been reached on principle 3 despite seeming within reach after 13 years of intense and difficult negotiations. The world was moving into a new era in which decisions once taken unilaterally were now subject to multilateral consideration and seen in a broader and ultimately more satisfactory perspective. There was no clearer example than the

(Mr. Neuhaus, Australia)

multilateral action led by the United Nations in 1991 in the Gulf war. It would be a great pity if COPUOS could not complete its work on all the draft principles in 1992. However, it was heartening that agreement had been reached on principles 8 and 9.

45. Multilateralism should also be the hallmark of the approach to the issue of space debris. It was impossible to continue dumping refuse at random on the planet's surface, or indeed in the region of space surrounding the biosphere. If debris was allowed to continue to accumulate indiscriminately in that region, the risk would increase in the short term that space missions, manned and unmanned, would suffer accidents or even disasters. The countries which used outer space had a special responsibility to preserve the environment of space so that other nations could also make use of it in exercise of their legitimate right. His country appreciated the work being done by individual countries with respect to space debris but reiterated its firm view that it was already time to include the issue in the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

46. The same could be said with respect to the geostationary orbit. Australia had supported the proposal that States should examine in COPUOS the feasibility of drawing up new guidelines which would result in the removal of any of the current geostationary orbit guidelines which had ceased to be useful. It would pursue the question at the 1992 meeting.

47. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee's next meeting would be held on Thursday, 7 November 1991, at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.